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HCR 86 RELATING TO EARTH DAY

Statement for
House Committee on
Ecology and Environmental Protection
Public Hearing, 21 March 1980

By
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HCR 86 would endorse the April 22, 1980 observation of Earth Day in Hawaii. This statement on the resolution does not reflect an institutional position of the University.

In justifying the observance of Earth Day, the resolution calls attention to the concern with maintaining Hawaiian lifestyles, to the need for preserving our air and water resources, and to the need for resource conservation and recycling.

The first Earth Day was observed on 22 April 1970 nationally, and in Hawaii specifically by proclamation of the Governor, John Burns. Resource conservation had, of course, been of concern to the earliest peoples in Hawaii. Special concerns had already been manifest in the Legislature a few years earlier, for example, concerns with water quality. Earlier in 1970 the Legislature passed the Environmental Quality Control Act that called for the establishment of our Center and the State Office of Environmental Quality Control. Still, Earth Day 1970 represents a notable date in the development of the "environmental movement."

Since 1970, Earth Day has been observed less formally. In 1980, however, the 10-year anniversary will be observed in communities throughout the country. It is fitting that Hawaii join in this national observance with formal recognition of Earth Day and what it represents.

We would suggest, indeed, that the observation be continued annually. It is quite clear that no final disposition of environmental problems can ever be expected in Hawaii, in the nation or in the world as a whole. Earth Days serve as convenient reminders of the needs for the management of environmental quality and natural resources in the same way that Thanksgiving Days remind us to be grateful for the resources available to us and Arbor Days remind us of the needs related to a particular aspect of environmental management. We do not suggest that Earth Day be a public holiday, like Thanksgiving Day, but that institution of annual observation otherwise would be appropriate.